

REMARKS

Applicants have received and reviewed the Office Action dated March 2, 2010. By way of response, Applicants have cancelled claim 27 without prejudice, amended claims 23, 24, 28-30, 34, 35, 37-40, 45, 48, and 49, and added new claims 50-58. No new matter has been added. Claims 23-26, 28-35, and 37-58 are pending.

Applicants submit that the amended and newly presented claims are supported by the specification as filed. In particular, support for amended claims 23 and 35 and new claims 50-58 can be found throughout the specification as filed including at least at page 17, first paragraph, and at Figures 4 and 5.

For the reasons presented below, Applicants respectfully submit that the amended and newly presented claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Examiner Interview

Applicants' undersigned representative thanks the Examiner for courtesies extended during the in-person interview on February 25, 2010. At that interview, the Examiner suggested that independent claims directed to the features of the apparatus illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 may receive favorable consideration. Applicants respectfully submit such claims in the present amendment.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 23-35 and 37-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Blake, US 964,083 in view of Rohr et al., US 6,059,120, Newman et al., US 4,962,858, and Adams, US 409,091. Although this rejection has not been applied to the newly presented claims, it is discussed insofar as it might apply. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As Applicants' undersigned representative discussed with the Examiner at the recent interview, the cited references, either alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest a method or apparatus like the embodiment illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 of the present application. The present independent claims are directed to such an embodiment and recite a method and apparatus employing a transverse belt with a concave profile that is "progressively adjustable from a first position wherein the belt is in a fully lowered cross-sectional configuration to a

second position wherein the belt is in a fully raised cross-sectional configuration and to positions intermediate between the first position and the second position". Thus, the presently claimed invention is free of this rejection.

Additional Comments on the Cited References

Applicants respectfully submit that the Adams reference does not remedy the shortcomings of the Blake reference. The Adams reference discloses a series of parallel channels and/or grooves, and not the claimed continuous spiral formation.

Applicants respectfully submit that the idler roller H of the Blake reference can not simply be moved to allow for a symmetrical/asymmetrical cross sectional configuration. The Blake reference does not illustrate or describe a support structure onto which this idler roller H is to be mounted (lines 76 – 83). And, inspection of Figure 1 shows a support structure for idler roller H on the side opposite to where reference H is located, although partially obscured by water pipe M, which appears to be static.

Conclusion

Accordingly, based on the foregoing differences, Applicants submit that the cited references neither teach nor suggest the presently claimed methods and apparatus, and withdrawal of this rejection is earnestly solicited.

Summary

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Please consider this a PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME for a sufficient number of months to enter these papers or any future reply, if appropriate.

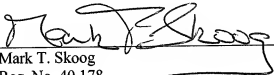
Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,

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2 June '10


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